

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 W

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R 131606Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6311

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUENOS AIRES 4550

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE REACTION TO BICENTENNIAL

REF: (A) STATE 169682, (B) BUENOS AIRES 4416

1. US BICENTENNIAL WAS OCCASION FOR OUTPOURING OF EXPRESSIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF GOOD WILL TOWARD AND ADMIRATION FOR US. MOST NEWSPAPERS RAN SPECIAL EDITIONS OR SECTIONS; TV CHANNELS AND RADIO STATIONS CARRIED SPECIAL FEATURES. (ONLY MOON-LANDING RIVALED BICENTENNIAL IN FAVORABLE ATTENTION TO US). ATTEANDANCE AT EMBASSY RECEPTION WAS WITHOUT PRECEDENCE IN RECENT YEARS (SEE REF B), AND EMBOFFS REPORTED RECEIVING FLOWERS AND CONGRATULATIONS FROM NEIGHBORS ON MORNING OF JULY 4. IN ADDITION, VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS HELD COMMEMORATIVE FUNCTIONS. ACADEMY OF LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, FOR EXAMPLE, OFFERED LECTURE SERIES ON "CONSTITUTIONALISM IN US," GENERAL THRUST OF WHICH WAS THAT US ONE OF FEW COUNTRIES IN WORLD WITH REAL RULE OF LAW AND WHERE CONSTITUTION REIGNS ABOVE ANY WHO WOULD ABUSE IT.

2. ARGENTINE COMMITTEE TO CELEBRATE US BICENTENNIAL ORGANIZED ITSELF WEEK BEFORE JULY 4 (WITH NO PROMPTING FROM--OR EVEN COORDINATION WITH--EMBASSY) AND STAGED WREATH-LAYING AT GEORGE WASHINGTON MONUMENT AND DINNER ON NIGHT OF JULY 6 WHICH SO WELL ATTENDED MANY HAD TO BE TURNED AWAY AT DOOR.

3. VERY POSITIVE (ONE MIGHT ALMOST SAY "EFFUSIVE") REACTION MAY SEEM CURIOUSLY OUT OF CHARACTER FOR ARGENTINES, GIVEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HISTORIC SENSE OF RIVALRY THEY ONCE HAD VIS-A-VIS US. COMMENTS

MADE TO US BY MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AND BY PRIVATE CITIZENS
SUGGEST THAT ARGENTINES NO LONGER VIEW US IN THOSE TERMS;
SENSE OF RIVALRY HAS BEEN MUTED (OR EXTINGUISHED) BY REALISTIC
APPRAISAL OF ARGENTINA'S SITUATION. STILL WALLOWING IN TROUGH OF
ITS OWN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, ARGENTINA SEEMS NOW
TO LOOK WITH GRUDGING BUT NONETHELESS SINCERE ADMIRATION AT
US AS COUNTRY WHICH HAS HAD ITS PROBLEMS BUT WHICH HAS SOLVED
THEM WITHIN CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND GONE ON TO GREATNESS,
AS ARGENTINA HAS NOT. AS ONE ARGENTINE FIREND PUT IT TO
EMBOFF: "US IS GREAT COUNTRY BECAUSE YOUR PEOPLE AND GOVERN-
ENT TAKE THE LAW SERIOUSLY AND COOPERATIE TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL
GOALS. IF ARGENTINA ENJOYED EVEN A FRACTION OF THE CONSENSUS
PREVAILING IN US AND IF PEOPLE OBEYED THE LAW AS THEY DO IN
US, ARGENTINA COULD BE A PARADISE. BUT WE HAVE LITTLE HOPE
THAT WE CAN CHANGE QUICKLY. YOU HAVE DEVELOPED ATTITUDES
OVER 200 YEARS. SO HAVE WE. BUT OURS ARE ALL IN THE WRONG
DIRECTION."

HILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BUENOS04550
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760762/aaaaccdd.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY, LOU
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY, LOU
Reference: 76 STATE 169682, 76 BUENOS AIRES 4416
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: schaeafaj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 FEB 2004 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <24 SEP 2004 by schaeafaj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARGENTINE REACTION TO BICENTENNIAL
TAGS: PDIP, AR
To: SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006